

# **CITIZEN'S TRANSPORTATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

## **Burton Barr Public Library**

### **Meeting Minutes November 19, 2002**

A Citizen's Transportation Oversight Committee (CTOC) meeting was held at the Burton Barr Public Library, 1221 North Central Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Phoenix, Arizona on November 19, 2002 with Chairperson Roc Arnett presiding.

#### **Members Present:**

Roc Arnett, Chairperson  
Dwight Amery, Member-at-Large  
Jim Lykins, Maricopa County District 2  
Ron Gawlitta, Maricopa County District 3

#### **Members Absent:**

Tom Liddy, Maricopa County District 1  
Paul Schwartz, Maricopa County District 4

#### **Others Present:**

Victor Mendez, ADOT, Director  
John Carlson, Governor's Office  
Elizabeth Neville, ADOT  
Carolyn Deobler, ADOT  
Steve Jimenez, ADOT  
Eric Anderson, MAG  
Ken Driggs, RPTA  
David Zuckerman, citizen  
John B. Shaw, citizen  
William "Blue" Crowley, citizen  
Michelle McCroskey, citizen  
Edward Johnson, citizen

Chuck Eaton, ADOT  
Kwi Kang, ADOT  
Steve Hansen, ADOT  
Les Bell, ADOT  
Dan Lance, ADOT  
Eric Crowe, DMJM  
Joe Plota, DMJM  
Bob McKnight, citizen  
Joe Ryan, citizen  
Howard Lavitt, citizen  
Jerry Gross, citizen

#### **1. Call To Order:**

Chairperson Arnett called the Citizen's Transportation Oversight Committee meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Chairperson Arnett presented Dwight Amery with his Governor's plaque.

#### **2. Approval of Minutes, September 17, 2002:**

Chairperson Arnett called for a motion. Ron Gawlitta moved to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2002 meeting and Jim Lykins seconded the motion.

#### **3. Staff Report:**

Chuck Eaton reported the following information:

Cost and revenue projection updates are underway. The current growth rate in the RARF tax is much slower than previous years due to the condition of the economy. This year is slightly more than one percent over last year. Written copies of Chuck's briefing notes were provided to members, updating them on the status of construction projects.

Steve Hansen reviewed a color-coded map depicting the status of right-of-way acquisitions on the Santan and Red Mountain freeways.

The following questions and comments were made:

Ron Gawlitta asked if the Gila River Indian Community is cooperating on the right-of-way on the Loop 202, I-10/Maricopa Road TI. Mr. Eaton said they have had very positive meetings with the tribe and it is expected to go to their Council soon.

In response to Mr. Gawlitta's question, Mr. Hansen also stated all of the funding for the Santan and Red Mountain is in hand for this fiscal year.

In response to another member's question, Mr. Hansen said it typically takes two to three days to conduct an appraisal review.

#### **4. Agua Fria Freeway (101L) Access 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue to I-17:**

**Steve Jimenez, ADOT**, introduced Eric Crowe from DMJM & Harris, explaining they are the general consultants who provided preliminary plans for the entire freeway system.

**Eric Crowe, DMJM & Harris**, said they have researched the possibility of installing an access ramp at 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue/L101 in the past, but determined it would create a number of problems on the mainline and possibly add even more traffic to an already congested situation. He said, however, it might make sense to install an exit ramp at 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue to help alleviate the amount of traffic exiting at 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue. He said, currently, access to the John C. Lincoln hospital is relatively good unless a person misses the exit on I-17 and ends up on the 101. He noted a scoping project currently underway will add an auxiliary lane between 35<sup>th</sup> and 51<sup>st</sup> Avenues, relieving some of the merging from 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He said adding a ramp and using the frontage road for excess capacity for the freeway might have some merit, however, problems will occur where the ramp merges with the frontage road.

The following questions and comments were made:

Chairperson Arnett asked if MAG has suggested any solutions to the congestion on n/w L101. Mr. Crowe said MAG mentioned potentially adding a general purpose lane from the I-17 ramps through 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue. He agreed the additional lane would help, explaining the ramps from I-17 and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue are full and being forced into one lane. He pointed out that continued growth in the west valley will compound the problem. It was suggested that the hospital signage on I-17 be enhanced to ensure people do not miss the appropriate exits. Chairperson Arnett asked about the additional lanes added to the Loop 202. Mr. Lance explained the stripping was done to alleviate a bottleneck and was accomplished for just under \$600,000. He noted it would have cost approximately \$25 million to physically widen that section of the freeway.

#### **5. Regional Transit Plan Alternatives:**

**Ken Driggs, R.P.T.A.**, said magnetic levitation was given careful consideration when they started looking at elevated rail. He stated, at that time, they were told Germany would implement revenue service on magnetic levitation within one year. He said that has yet to occur. He explained the voters did not support the concept because of the costs involved and fears about the system's impact on surrounding neighborhoods, noting the



preferred route at that time would have placed the elevated rail system on 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. He noted Pete Corsteen, a spokesman for one of their major opponent's, stated overhead rail causes noise for two blocks on either side of the rail, resulting in the creation of slum areas. He said, regardless, the R.P.T.A. felt an elevated rail system would revolutionize the valley. He explained that most of the systems implemented throughout the United States at that time were at-grade light rail systems. He said light rail has become much more popular because, although slower, it is seen as being community and customer friendly. He noted the people who opposed elevated rail on Central Avenue have embraced light rail and see it as a possible boon to property values along Central Avenue. He said they are still reviewing all options to determine how best to proceed with a light rail system in the valley.

The following questions and comments were made:

Mr. Gawlitta thanked Mr. Driggs for using a broad approach and including an elevated system in his discussion, noting he strongly favors an elevated system. He said he recently rode the Vancouver system and was extremely impressed. He said, while the committees agreed on light rail, they were not given the alternative of an at-grade or elevated system. He expressed his opinion that an elevated system that uses existing right-of-way would be a tremendous benefit. He said unbiased cost estimates run 30 to 50 percent more than an at-grade system, however, they do not take into account the right-of-way costs and utility relocation costs associated with an at-grade system.

Mr. Driggs pointed out the tax is set to expire in 2005, explaining, therefore, a plan has to be finalized within the next few months to be able to go to the voters in 2004. He suggested now is the time to begin a dialog about available options and commuter issues.

Joe Ryan, citizen, made a presentation to the Committee entitled "Show me a better way to go, Arizona!" Due to time restrictions, he was unable to complete his presentation, however, a written copy of his comments was submitted for the record.

## **6. MAG Regional Transportation Plan Status:**

**Eric Anderson, MAG**, said Maricopa County has grown 45 percent each decade over the past four decades, noting there are currently about 3.3 million people living in the valley. He pointed out the number of registered vehicles in the valley increased by 810,000 between 1990 and 2000, resulting in a considerable increase in daily vehicle miles traveled. He said unofficial projections indicate 6.5 million people will reside in the region by 2030. He noted a joint study is currently underway with Pinal County to look at how growth in Pinal County will affect Maricopa County and how the transportation systems should link to ensure the arterial network and grid systems connect. He pointed out travel increases at a faster rate than population. He reviewed Level Of Service maps that show severe congestion will exist in many areas by 2025. Mr. Anderson said technology, including signal synchronization, will play a part in handling the increased traffic. He said build out of the grid system, providing for arterial continuity, is another key and relatively low cost alternative. He stated they anticipate having a performance based plan finalized by September. He reviewed maps depicting the location of planned developments as well as future housing and job distributions. He said they will need to utilize all of their supply management, demand management and land use management tools to provide a transportation system that provides mobility and accessibility throughout the region. A written copy of his presentation was submitted for the record.

The following questions and comments were made:

Chairperson Arnett asked Mr. Anderson if the MAG model will take growth 25 years out into consideration. Mr. Anderson said future growth will have to be taken into consideration when looking at prioritizing transportation improvements, but a lot of needs already exist and have to be addressed.



## **7. Regional Freeway System Performance Audits:**

**Chuck Eaton, ADOT**, explained ARS § 41-1279.03 requires the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit every three years, noting HB2347 revised the frequency of succeeding audits from three to five years. He read ARS § 28-6356-F6, outlining CTOC's responsibilities with regard to the audit. He reviewed the results and recommendations of three previous audits. He said CTOC will help the Auditor General set audit parameters in the fall of 2004 for the next performance audit scheduled for the spring of 2005. A written copy of his presentation was submitted for the record.

The following questions and comments were made:

Chairperson Arnett suggested the committee send a letter to the Governor, the House, Senate, and the Auditor General, outlining what has happened over the past 5-12 years and highlighting the fact that the performance audits have generated positive results in the management of the system.

Action: A motion to send a letter to the Governor, the House, Senate, and the Auditor General was made by Dwight Amery, seconded by Jim Lykins and passed unanimously.

## **8. Call to the Public:**

**Michelle McCroskey, citizen**, addressed the Committee concerning freeway noise from Gilbert to Greenfield Roads. She said their neighborhood was very quiet prior to the opening of the freeway. She stated they attended several public meetings, wrote letters, and submitted a petition signed by over 100 residents asking for sound mitigation. She said, however, it became evident once the freeway opened those there requests for noise mitigation was not taken into consideration. She also expressed concern about the lack of privacy, noting people driving down the exit ramp at McDowell can see into their backyards. She said the road surface along their area of the freeway differs from other areas, amplifying the noise. She said current decibel readings indicate about 68 decibels, pointing out the freeway is only at 25 percent capacity. She asked to have the freeway resurfaced with rubberized asphalt.

Chairperson Arnett informed Ms. McCroskey that ADOT is aware of the noise issues along that portion of the freeway and are currently looking into the matter.

**Bob McKnight, citizen**, regarding the light rail he expressed his opinion the 10-foot wide lanes shown on the preliminary engineering drawings for Central Avenue at Thomas Road are too narrow. He said a half-mile is too far to walk to a trolley station given summer temperatures. He suggested a simulation of conditions be developed prior to the start of any construction. He also suggested they educate the public on what it will take to get Congress to appropriate the necessary funding. He questioned why they are looking at going four blocks away from an existing right-of-way when the railroad has previously indicated a willingness to work with the state on the right-of-way.

Chairperson Arnett noted CTOC does not have direct responsibility for right-of-way. He suggested Mr. McKnight direct his questions to the R.P.T.A.

**William "Blue" Crowley, citizen**, said Chairperson Arnett skewered the process by not allowing him to comment on the last agenda item. He requested additional time to make his comments. Chairperson Arnett allowed Mr. Crowley four minutes to speak. Mr. Crowley said the CTOC is a citizen committee and is obliged to accept citizen input. He referred to a 1994 letter from ATT, stating they still do not have a bus going by there. He submitted a copy of an Input Opportunity Report wherein he asked about the deck park. He stated the City of Phoenix needs to abandon the property to the state. He referred to newspaper articles on light rail and

bus rapid transit. He said the state is the largest employer and should encourage its employees to utilize buses, carpools or other means of alternate transportation. He said he was told the deck park station could not be developed because of a shortage of funding. He accused Chairperson Arnett of skewing the process by not allowing public participation. He asked if the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee have tendered their resignations to the Governor-elect, giving her the choice of appointing other individuals.

**9. Next Regular Meeting:**

Citizen's Transportation Oversight Committee  
Tuesday, 5:00 p.m. January 21, 2003  
Arizona Department of Transportation  
206 S. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave, Rm. 145-147  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Action: A motion to approve the proposed 2003 calendar was made by Mr. Lykins, seconded by Mr. Gawlitta and passed unanimously.

**10. CTOC Member Reports:**

Mr. Gawlitta noted the Loop 303 bridge over Grand Avenue has been completed. He said he attended a meeting last Thursday wherein the City of Phoenix briefed residents of Anthem of a 17,000 or 18,000-acre annexation.

**11. Closing comments and Adjournment:**

No comments were made.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.